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South Bureau Security Chief 'Comes Home'

By Laura Kloth

(January 13, 2009) As 2009 rolls in, keeping Metro's patrons and operators safe is a huge priority for Transit Services South Bureau Capt. John M. Witt.

In September, Witt was appointed to head up transit security on the Metro Green Line and Metro Blue Line as well as the bus lines operating out of the South Bay and Gateway Cities sectors and divisions.

Being placed at the South Bureau was like coming home for Witt, who worked as a lieutenant there from 1999 to 2003. While there, he was instrumental in hashing out and securing Metro's contract with the sheriff's department.

"I was glad I had the opportunity to come back," he said during an interview following his appointment.

Of course, Witt notes, there have been changes since then.

Metro's growing geographic area is certain to become an "interesting challenge," Witt said, indicating that his staff will meet that by using patrols more creatively.

"We try realigning how people are assigned in the field," he said, declining to provide too many specifics. "I personally ride the trains. Sometimes, you know, I don't let anybody know I'm going to be on there. And I make my own assessments of response times," he said. Witt says sometimes people are very responsive, and sometimes they're surprised to see him, when he greets them with a friendly "Good morning."

With more than 32 years at the sheriff's department, Witt has worked in just about every division including, the men's central jail, the narcotic's bureau, records and the Office of the Undersheriff. His current duties include overseeing the Transit Services Bureau Communications Center which operates 24/7.

It pays to have moved around, he notes, as he plans to tap into his contacts and department resources such as the sheriff's beefed up databases to do his job.



Transit Services South Bureau Capt. John M. Witt heads up transit security on the Metro Green and Metro Blue lines as well as the bus lines operating out of the South Bay and Gateway Cities sectors and divisions.

-- Ned Racine contributed to this report.

